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THE PILGRIM TERCENTENARY CELEBRATION  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1920

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# The Place of the Pilgrims in American History

BY

EVARTS BOUTELL GREENE

*Professor of History*

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## The Puritan Pilgrim

*To Them that Sit in the Seats of the Scorners*

BY

ERNEST BERNBAUM

*Professor of English*

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AN ADDRESS AND A POEM FOR THE

Pilgrim Tercentenary Celebration  
at the University of Illinois

December 21, 1920

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*The* PURITAN PILGRIM  
*To Them that Sit in the Seats of the Scorners*

BY

ERNEST BERNBAUM



## THE PURITAN PILGRIM

*To Them that Sit in the Seats of the Scorners*



*WE HAVE LOOSED THE  
JUDGMENT OF SCORNERS,  
YE DEEM US JOYLESS  
AND HARSH*

*Obdurate as granite boulders, rigorous as East  
winds of March,  
Icy as Plymouth waters, bleak as the sands of  
Cape Cod,  
Self-tortured, and slaves to the letter of a tyran-  
nical God.*

We denied not our grievous transgressions,  
ye who scorn us and turn from our way:  
We searched out our inmost offenses, we  
owned them in clear light of day:  
Not in cloistered recess did we whisper our  
sins, nor belittle and hide;  
In the face of the full congregation we  
humbled our spiritual pride.

Ye deem that our lives were as gloomy as the  
long black nights we abode,  
Rude as our comfortless dwellings, bare as the  
fields that we sowed.  
But ours was the rapture of prophets who  
heard the still voice of God;  
And ours was the joy of the freeman, for  
untithed acres we trod;  
And ours was the gladness of seekers,  
pioneers of the trails of the morrow,  
As we blazed onward paths for our children,  
in the sweat of our temporal sorrow!  
To the East we beheld the great deep, that  
had threatened us all to o'er-whelm,  
By th' inscrutable Lord now upraised as the  
barrier wall of our realm:  
Safeguarded by his dread ocean, we dwelt as  
emparadised,  
Beyond reach of the croziers of prelates, the  
minions of Anti-Christ,  
Escaped from the strength of the sceptre of  
the lords of tyranny,  
Secure in the rights of freemen under laws  
that were made by the free!  
Ye may gather more bountiful harvests on the  
trees that sprang from our roots,  
But 'twas ours to taste the sweet savor of  
liberty's precious first-fruits;  
And not for your flesh-pots of Egypt would  
we barter our inward delight  
As we walked in freedom of conscience in the  
great Jehovah's sight.

Ye deem that we knew not love: ye misname  
     what ye glorify—  
 The “love” that is lust of the flesh, the “love”  
     that is pride of the eye,  
 Begotten of revels and laughter, of Merry  
     Mount’s vanities,  
 Imbruting the soul and self-quenchèd in bitter  
     empoisoned lees.  
 Not in riot and drunkenness, in chambering  
     and shame,  
 Did we find the true love that sustained us  
     through perils we overcame.  
 But the love that sublimes all the passions,  
     the love heroic and pure,—  
 Praise be to God that we knew it!—  
     who gave it that we might endure,—  
 The love speaking fearless and faithful,  
     “Whither thou goest will I go,  
 Thy people shall be my people, thy God the  
     God that I owe.”  
 Our women, in sickness and famine, in terror  
     of savage uncouth,  
 Wrought with the courage of Judith, the  
     single devotion of Ruth.  
 Arbutus flowers were our maidens, pale bloom  
     of New England springs;  
 They were wan with their watching, but  
     steadfast as heroines Israel sings.  
 For the ears of Philistia’s daughters artfully  
     frame ye your lay:

We loved with emotion too deep for your  
rhetorician's play:  
Inexpressive we were, stern-visaged; that our  
hearts did glow with love  
Not our words but our deeds shall bear wit-  
ness before its great Author above!

Ye deem we rejoiced not in beauty: forsake  
ye the grace we adored?  
Have ye fashioned a nobler beauty than the  
wondrous word of the Lord?  
We thrilled as He spake through Psalmist and  
Prophet, Apostle and Son;  
Enraptured we saw that His Spirit wrought  
onward what He had begun,—  
The subduing of Chaos by Order, the  
breathing of soul into heart,  
The moulding of real by ideal, the Master  
Artificer's art.  
We exulted as instruments conscious in the  
hands of His glorious will  
Who wrestleth with evil in matter, who labors  
and conquers still;  
Who maketh the clouds His chariot, who  
walketh on wings of the wind,  
Who inspireth His lowliest servants with  
flaming fire from His mind.  
We knew the joy of awaking in sense-  
imbrued sinner's breast,

In the darkened mind of the heathen, the  
light of salvation's behest.  
Ye have sought out many inventions: do  
they give ye the peace ye implored,  
Or the strength of a faith such as ours in our  
Covenant made with the Lord?  
Who preserved us from seas, foes, and famine,  
who brought us through soul-searching strife,  
To the peace that passeth all knowledge, to  
the hope of eternal life.

Our generation and yours in the fullness of  
time shall meet:  
Look to yourselves ere we gather before the  
great Judgment Seat:  
O ye that have scornfully mocked us, O ye  
proud minds that have sneered,  
Shall ye hear your sentence in thunder ere ye  
fear the God that we feared?  
But ye, the sons of our spirit, in freedom  
pursuing the good,—  
That may have new revelations vouchsafed  
of His Fatherhood,—  
So ye search God's mind in your conscience,  
so a vision ye seek and obey,  
From the bourne of salvation we bid ye  
Godspeed on your Pilgrim way!





*The* PLACE *of the* PILGRIMS  
*in* AMERICAN HISTORY

BY

EVARTS BOUTELL GREENE



## THE PILGRIMS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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THREE HUNDRED YEARS ago a little group of English men and women—about one hundred in all—whom we will call the pilgrims, disembarked from the ship Mayflower on the shore of Plymouth Harbor, Massachusetts, after a stormy voyage of more than two months across the Atlantic from Plymouth, England. Through months of terrible hardship, during which half their number died, they held on with stubborn heroism until they had laid the solid, though modest, foundations of a new English commonwealth. It is a simple story but memorable, if for no other reason, as an inspiring example of Christian faith and courage. Yet that is not the only, or the chief, reason why, in this country of their descendants, and with scarcely less interest in the old home they left behind, this anniversary is being observed today.

It is rather because the heroism of the Pilgrims was no isolated achievement, because others followed where they blazed the trail.

The commonwealth of the Pilgrims was not of course the first planted by Englishmen on American soil. Thirteen years ago we celebrated here another tercentenary in memory of another group of pioneers who began on the James River the first of that long series of successful colonial experiments which made possible the stately fabric of the American Union. By 1620, when the Pilgrims landed, the success of the Jamestown experiment was already assured. That achievement also was bought at a heavy cost; the loss of human life, year in and year out, for more than a decade, was more appalling in Virginia than at Plymouth. Some of those earlier adventurers also endured and, hardened by the terrible ordeal, became the nucleus of the "Old Dominion." The family, the state, and the church took root; and in 1619, more than a year before the day we celebrate, the first representative assembly in America met in the little Jamestown Church on the edge of the Virginia wilderness.

The founding of that first English colony may fairly be regarded as a national enterprise. The company which sent it out was chartered by the King, and was at first largely controlled by the crown. Among the grantees under the first two charters were civil officials of high rank; soldiers who had fought for England in the continental wars; influential merchant companies of London; and the clergy of the national church. The chief executive officer of the Virginia Company under its second charter was also the first governor of the great East India Company and a leading figure in several other organizations for the development of commerce over-seas. The enterprise was celebrated by distinguished poets and preachers as a great design to challenge Spanish monopoly of the New World, to carry Christian civilization to the wilderness, and plant there, as Raleigh said, a new "English nation."

The Virginia Company which governed the affairs of that colony was not a group of colonists but rather an association of promoters, investors of capital who expected others to do the rough work of the wilderness. It was these investors, first, and afterwards, when their charter

was revoked, the English crown, which could in the last resort approve, or disapprove, whatever policies might be adopted by the men on the ground. Even when the first representative assembly was established, it came not through the action of the colonists but as the gift of the Company in England.

Again, the early Virginians did not come to build an ideal commonwealth but primarily because they were attracted by the economic opportunities which the New World seemed to offer. In the main, their religious and political convictions squared with the traditions of their old home. They were loyal to king and country. They adjusted themselves easily to a provincial constitution in which the royal governor reproduced in miniature the prerogatives of the crown. They were capable of standing up for their rights; but the rights they claimed were those secured to English subjects by the ancient common law. When their representative assembly was formed, it asked nothing better than the privileges of the English House of Commons. By their own choice, as well as by the policy of the home government, the national church of the mother country

became also the established church of Virginia. It is true that this English inheritance was modified in after years, in the hard school of frontier life, and that later immigration brought in new forces of dissent. Nevertheless, for a century and a half the civic and religious ideals of the Virginia gentry resembled closely those of the corresponding class in England.

At first it seemed as if the colonization of New England might take a similar course. Here also were great economic attractions, especially the fisheries and the fur-trade, to interest the business men of London, Bristol, and Plymouth. To exploit these resources, as well as those of the south, land and trade were given to private corporations, and there were ambitious plans for establishing semi-feudal principalities not unlike the proprietary provinces of Maryland and Carolina. In the very year in which the Pilgrims landed, the Council for New England was organized with commercial privileges and political authority very similar to those enjoyed by the Virginia Company. The promoters of this New England Company were able men, leaders in business and politics; and yet in the



end this project, and practically all similar projects for New England, failed to achieve substantial results. So it came about that this region was left free for colonization of a very different kind, in which actual colonists took the initiative and kept the control. To use the familiar language of our own time, colonial New England stood out among all the European colonies of that era as the peculiar home of "self-determination." It is the special distinction of the Plymouth Pilgrims that, building much better than they knew, they were the pioneers in this new type of self-reliant, self-determining colonization.

In sharp contrast to Virginia, the pioneer colony of New England was in no sense a national undertaking. It had no royal charter; all the colonists could get from King James was the promise to ignore them if they behaved themselves properly. The whole enterprise was much too small an affair to attract the attention of the nation at large, or of its ruling class. So an event which is celebrated today by two great peoples was almost unnoticed by its contemporaries. For capital, the Pilgrims had to depend on London business men and to get that

help they had to accept some unwelcome restrictions; but the chief promoters of this undertaking were real colonists, not investors who remained comfortably at home to direct and supervise the work at long range.

More striking still is the fundamental difference of aim between these two groups of pioneers. Both hoped to make a better living in the New World than they had found in the old; but, while the Virginians were on the whole content with those institutions in church and state which they inherited from their fathers, the New Englanders brought with them the spirit of dissent. They were indeed still patriotic Englishmen; in their famous Mayflower Compact, they spoke deferentially of their sovereign lord, King James and they were in every way less aggressive than their Puritan successors of Massachusetts Bay. Yet, after all, they did come with the deliberate purpose of establishing a new society, different in some important respects from that which they had left behind them.

The Pilgrims thus became the first in a great procession of Europeans, exiles by compulsion or by choice, who found in America a laboratory of experi-

mental sociology. Here in the wide spaces of the New World men have tried with safety experiments in church and state which in an older and more crowded society are bound to be far more difficult and dangerous. So it came about that American society, in its formative years, had more than a normal proportion of men and women, who were not satisfied with established traditions; who did not take the existing order for granted, as men take the weather or the procession of the seasons, but sought to mould society in accordance with some new interpretation of truth. It was this over-representation, if you please, of the dissenting temper in our early society which, combined in varying proportions with the economic forces of frontier life, has done most to make an American something different from a European.

For two centuries, at least, the most influential form of European dissent in American life was that body of religious thought and feeling which we call Puritanism. This influence was most strongly felt in New England, but it was by no means confined to that section. Few half-truths, for instance, are more misleading than the popular antithesis of

New England Puritan and Southern Cavalier. The Scotch-Irishman, or the Ulster-Scot, impressed on the Upland South a Puritan spirit scarcely less strong and enduring than that which came to America from England by way of Plymouth Harbor and Massachusetts Bay. If, among all the soldiers of our great Civil War, we were to choose the man who most nearly embodied the fighting Puritanism of the early days, the spirit of Cromwell's Ironsides, most of us would probably select no one of the conspicuous Union Generals but that great Southern soldier, Stonewall Jackson. The Plymouth Pilgrims, then, were only the first thin line of skirmishers who spied out the land, the little vanguard of the great Puritan army.

What, then, was this Puritanism which we find in so many different forms from the days of William Bradford and John Winthrop to those of Stonewall Jackson? Many historians have tried their hands on a definition of Puritanism; but with astonishingly different and generally unsatisfactory results because the term is really hard to define. Many things commonly called Puritan, including nowadays a moderate respect for the

Ten Commandments, are not peculiar to Puritans. Others are characteristic of particular kinds of Puritans, but not of all. We may safely begin, however, by saying that they were radical Protestants; to use a phrase made familiar by Matthew Arnold, they stood for the Protestantism of the Protestant religion and they had little use for the "middle way," chosen by the Church of England between the Roman communion and the more thorough-going Protestantism of Geneva and some of the German reformers.

In this aggressive Protestant spirit, Puritans of every kind believed in getting away from the time-honored traditions of the medieval church to what they considered a more completely Biblical Christianity. For them the *final* authority in religion was not the clergy, nor even the church as a whole, but an inspired book, the Bible. In the interpretation of that Book, they were much influenced by certain great teachers of continental Europe, notably John Calvin, the French reformer and theologian. Under the guidance of these teachers, they concluded that Biblical Christianity required simpler forms of worship than those of the Roman and Anglican com-

munions. The use of art to symbolize religious truth seemed to them full of danger, likely to obscure rather than to reveal spiritual truth; and, though they believed in the sacraments of baptism and the communion, they laid special stress on preaching. The Puritans decided also that church organization needed to be much simplified; they found no warrant in the Bible for the authority then exercised by the English bishops, and some of the radicals wished to abolish that office altogether, though others were content with lessening its powers. Like most Protestants, they emphasized the principle of salvation by faith, rather than by compliance with the rules of the church, and they accepted Calvin's doctrine that saving faith came only to those who had been divinely chosen or "elected."

The English Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth century felt bound to protest against lax standards of morality; they were often excessively severe in their judgments of themselves and of other people, condemning as sinful enjoyments which seemed to others quite innocent. This state of mind, however, is by no means peculiar to Puritans

properly so called; it has been characteristic of many intensely religious persons, regardless of the particular creed they have happened to profess. A more distinctive characteristic of the English Puritans was their insistence on strict obedience to Old Testament precepts about Sabbath observance.

Agreeing fairly well in these fundamental matters, the Puritans were much divided among themselves in details of doctrine, modes of worship, and ideas of church government; and out of these differences arose in the end a large number of sects. At the beginning of the colonial era, the most important line of cleavage among these people was on the question of their relation to the national church. These were Puritans of various shades who wished to stay in the church and try to mould it in accordance with their own views, and there were others who considered it so hopelessly wrong that all Christians should withdraw from it. It was this separatist group who became the pioneers of Puritan colonization in New England and thus, though very few in numbers, exercised an important influence on those who followed them.

The distinguishing characteristic of the Separatists was their conception of the church. They rejected the idea of a national establishment and conceived of a church rather as an association of the true Christian believers living together in any particular community,—a carefully sifted group of those who were divinely elected to be saved. In place of the episcopal system of government, these men advocated a “congregational” organization in which the minister and all other church officers were chosen by the local congregation. At the end of Elizabeth’s reign the Separatist groups were few and weak; there were some scholars and gentry among them but on the whole they came from the less influential classes. The government regarded their doctrines as dangerous to good order in church and state—almost anarchical; they were condemned even by many of the Puritans. On the whole, they were strongest in the eastern counties and in such towns as Norwich where there had been a considerable immigration of radical Protestants from the Netherlands. During the early years of James I, the Separatists were reinforced by a number of clergy and laymen who were



disappointed by the King's hostility toward Puritan tendencies in the national church; but they continued to be a small and persecuted group, forced to meet in secret, or to take refuge abroad, most commonly in Holland where they were hospitably received by the Dutch Calvinists and formed a few churches of their own.

Among these Separatist groups, one will always have a special interest for Americans because it included among its members the chief teachers of the Pilgrim colony. That is the little congregation which, by a curious chance, was accustomed to meet in the Manorhouse of the Archbishop of York at Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire. Scrooby was then a post station of some importance on the great Northern road from London and the man in charge was William Brewster, a Cambridge University graduate, who in the service of one of Elizabeth's ministers had seen something of life at court and also traveled abroad. On his retirement to the country, Brewster threw himself heartily into the Separatist movement and was undoubtedly the mainstay of the Scrooby congregation. At first this little group depended for their

religious teaching principally on Church of England clergy of Puritan leanings; but they were finally joined by a man of real intellectual distinction who became their pastor. This was John Robinson, sometime fellow of Cambridge University, whose heretical opinions had compelled him to give up his plans for a career, either in the University or in the church. Instead he became a prolific and able writer on Calvinistic theology and the congregational theory of church government. Most of the other members of this congregation were simple country people with little or no education; but among them there was one young fellow, recently won over to the Separatist teaching, who was destined to become the chief leader of the Pilgrim colony, and also its historian.

Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation furnishes the kernel about which has been gathered the little that we know about the Scrooby congregation. For many people, there is little suggestion of romance about historical sources, but the story of this Pilgrim manuscript may fairly be called romantic. Bradford began writing it about ten years after the landing at Plymouth and continued it

at odd times thereafter in the quiet intervals of his busy life. When he died, the book was still in manuscript and it remained unprinted for about two hundred years. It was, however, used by several of the early New England writers, including Thomas Hutchinson, the loyalist governor and historian of Massachusetts. In 1774, a few years after Hutchinson published his own narrative, he sailed away to England, never to return. By coincidence, or otherwise, the Bradford manuscript also disappeared and about seventy years passed before it was rediscovered. Then by a strange irony of fate, it turned up in the library of the Bishop of London. The irony is heightened if we remember that the particular bishop who governed the diocese of London when Bradford was working at the earlier chapters of his history was William Laud, the arch-enemy of Puritanism in all its forms.

Fortunately, time has softened the mutual animosities of churchman and Puritan, and so when the American Embassy in London, at the instance of Senator George F. Hoar, asked for the return of the manuscript to the State of Massachusetts, the request met with a

cordial response from the authorities in state and church. Some red tape had to be cut; but in 1897 the manuscript was brought back to Massachusetts and deposited in the State House in Boston. To those of us who are students of history, it is especially pleasant to remember that the Bishop of London who consummated this notable act of restitution and international courtesy between the two English-speaking nations was Mandell Creighton, himself one of the greatest of modern English historians.

It is a matter of some dispute among recent writers just how much definite persecution this particular group of Separatists actually suffered at the hands of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. It is enough to know that life was made uncomfortable for them in many ways; and so like others of their kind they took refuge in Holland, settling finally in the city of Leyden. There they engaged in various trades and industries while their pastor, John Robinson, became a member of the Leyden University and took part in the theological controversies of the time.

The Pilgrims soon realized, however, that they would not long be able to pre-

serve their separate community life, their English nationality, and their distinctive religious ideals. It was not easy, either, to make a satisfactory living under these conditions. To all these trials there was presently added the disturbing prospect of a reopening of the war between the Dutch and the Spaniards. So it was not strange that the thoughts of the Pilgrims should turn more and more to the New World as a place where they might begin a new life under more favorable conditions. They hoped, also, to use the words of one of their leaders, that they might lay a foundation "for the propagating and advancing the gospell of the Kingdom of Christ in this remote part of the world; yea though they should be, but even as stepping stones, unto others for the performing of so great a work." The decision to go to America was made only after much debate in which the hardships and dangers of the enterprise were pointed out; but the braver spirits insisted that "all great and honorable actions were accompanied with great difficulties," and must be "enterprised and overcome with answerable courages."

Some difficult business problems had to be solved before the project could be carried into effect. For the land on which the settlement was to be made, the "Pilgrims" turned to the Virginia Company which, under the leadership of Sir Edwin Sandys, wanted settlers and was not unfriendly to the Puritans. This they finally secured and their next task was to reach an understanding with the English government. In the effort to secure the King's approval, they took pains to declare their loyalty to the Crown, and stated their religious opinions in such a way as to cause the least possible offence. They were so far successful that James I agreed to "connive at them" as long as they behaved peaceably. A most serious problem was that of getting capital and it was finally solved by a partnership between the Pilgrims and a group of London business men. As in the case of Virginia, a joint stock company was formed with shares divided between the emigrants and the London partners. A Virginia precedent was followed also in setting up for the first seven years a communistic system in which all the land was held and worked for the company.

Finally all these difficulties were overcome and on September 6, 1620, the Mayflower sailed from Plymouth. Its company did not coincide exactly with the Leyden congregation, some of whom were left behind including Robinson himself; some of the rest were Separatists also, but others were merely employees of the company. After a stormy voyage of more than two months the Mayflower made land in what is now Provincetown harbor, on Cape Cod; another month passed before they finally selected as the place of their settlement the harbor of Plymouth. December was a bad season for beginning a new settlement on the New England coast and for the first year the death rate of the Plymouth people was comparable with that at Jamestown. The Pilgrims fortunately established with some of their Indian neighbors, friendly relations which were maintained for more than fifty years and as compared with Virginia, the period of extreme hardship was short; though there was a scarcity of food for some time, the worst was over by the end of the first year.

Here at Plymouth, the Pilgrims were outside the jurisdiction of the Virginia

Company, and simply squatters on land which now belonged to the Council for New England. With the help of influential friends, however, they secured in 1621 a grant from the Council. In 1630 this was enlarged in favor of some of the principal settlers; and subsequently transferred by the latter to the colony as a whole. After a few years of unsatisfactory experience the communistic plan was abandoned and the land was allotted to individuals, first temporarily and then permanently. The colonists were also able before long to buy out the London partners and thus secure complete control of their own business affairs. Under these conditions, the colony of "New Plymouth," as it was commonly called, developed into a community of small farmers with some interest in the fisheries and a fairly prosperous trade in furs, not only with the Indians in their immediate neighborhood but in places as far away as the Maine coast and the Connecticut Valley.

The political status of Plymouth was always precarious; the colonists never received a charter from the King, and the Council for New England probably had no right to authorize their govern-



ment. Left as they were without any strictly legal authority, they proceeded to organize a practically republican system. The famous Mayflower Compact which they adopted just before landing was not a constitution, but simply an agreement to abide by the will of the majority. For the business of a small community like this only the simplest kind of organization was necessary and that was all they had. They chose a governor every year to handle some necessary business and represent them in their relations with the outside world; later as the business developed, assistants were similarly elected. Necessary regulations or laws were made by the settlers at a general meeting. For a time the town of Plymouth and the colony of New Plymouth were practically identical; but as new towns were established the general assembly of all the freemen was replaced by a gathering of representatives from the towns. Much of the success of this simple but practical government was doubtless due to its governor, William Bradford, who was first chosen shortly after the landing and re-elected year after year. He was not only an efficient leader, but something of a scholar as

well; his history of the colony is likely always to stand as one of the classics of early American literature.

The Pilgrims were now also free to carry out their ideals of religious worship and church government. The congregational organization which they established for church affairs embodied the same principle of democratic self-government as the civil order which they built upon the Mayflower Compact and had a marked influence upon the later Puritan colonies. In this as in other respects, Plymouth is important primarily as the pioneer in a new movement. Always a small and comparatively poor community, it was soon overshadowed, and finally annexed by the younger and more prosperous Massachusetts Bay Colony. Nevertheless, the Pilgrims will always be remembered as having pointed the way which was followed by others to far greater achievements; they had truly been "as stepping stones unto others."

If the Pilgrims were forerunners, what of those who came after them, who followed the path which they had pointed out? Nine years after the founding of Plymouth, there began the great Puritan migration to Massachusetts, on a far

larger scale than any previous movement of Englishmen to the New World. The leaders of this migration were Puritans of a very different type from the obscure Separatists of Scrooby and Leyden. They were members of a great national party some of whom fought the battle of parliamentary government and the Puritan faith in England, while others saw their best hope for the realization of their ideals in the planting of new commonwealths across the sea. Until lately these men had hoped against hope to Puritanize the English church of which they were still members; some as laymen, others as clergy. By this time, however, the tide was running strongly against them.

To the average Puritan of 1629, the European prospect seemed very black for Protestantism in general, and for his own kind of Protestantism in particular. In England, especially, the enemies of the Puritans under the leadership of William Laud were apparently carrying everything before them. So it seemed to many men that the best way to prepare for a brighter day was to leave Europe to its fate for the present and try to build up in America a great "bulwark,"

as they said, "against Anti-Christ." They were not concerned about the theory of religious liberty in the modern sense; most of them did not pretend to be. Indeed the Puritans complained that the Stuart monarchy was not sufficiently strenuous in its prosecution of Catholics and they were quick to denounce Arminian heresies in the clergy of the national church. What they set out to do was not to establish an asylum for dissenters in general, but to conduct in their New England laboratory a great experiment in church and state. First and foremost they aimed to establish a "Bible Commonwealth," a theocratic republic in which the will of God as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures should be the primary guide, taking precedence even over the ancient common law.

In some way, never yet fully explained, this radical experiment was carried on under cover of a royal charter, ostensibly designed to facilitate the same kind of colony planting as that in Virginia. It happened, however, that nothing in the charter fixed the head office of the company in England and so the charter of a commercial corporation was trans-

formed into the constitution of a practically republican state. The Civil Wars in England presently kept the Mother Country too busy to check these irregular proceedings and so, for half a century, the great Puritan experiment was worked out with a minimum of interference. Church and state were closely united; church membership became a qualification for voting; dissenters were whipped, banished, and in a very few cases hanged for persistently returning to a colony where their presence was disturbing. The Massachusetts attitude in this matter was not unlike that of a physicist trying to protect delicate instruments in his laboratory from complicating lights or sounds.

Unfortunately for the Puritan theocracy, the spirit of dissent which they themselves had set in motion proved too strong for them. It was just as impossible for them to set limits to this spirit, as it was for King Canute to stay the waves of the sea. Dissenters and exiles themselves, they sent out other dissenters and exiles to plant new colonies, each working on some distinctive principle: Connecticut founded on a slightly more democratic theory; New Haven,

seeking a theocracy more rigid even than that of Massachusetts; Roger Williams, trying out his new-fangled idea of absolute divorce between church and state. With the exception of Williams none of these people, not even the Pilgrims themselves, stood for full religious liberty; but the outcome of the whole was variation; and variation, in the end, made for liberty.

One final word and I am done. Puritanism has surely much to answer for in its attempt to impose ideals by force upon the individual conscience. Even in the field of civil government, their theories had in them more of aristocracy than of true democracy. Yet it was in the Puritan colonies, with all their limitations, more than anywhere else that American communities first learned to govern themselves without the restraints of authority imposed from without. In Massachusetts, the settlers had the great advantage of legal support in a royal charter. Everywhere else—in Plymouth, Providence Plantations, Connecticut, and New Haven, self-government began without this external support, in a “plantation” covenant by which freemen, finding themselves out-

side any recognized jurisdiction, created a new jurisdiction for themselves, founded on common consent. So, when the New Englanders read in Locke's famous essay that all just government rested on the social compact, the doctrine was for them no mere theory; it corresponded to easily verified facts in their own experience.

It is this capacity for landing on their feet politically, so to speak, which has more than anything else contributed to make the English a great colonizing people and which has perhaps nowhere been more strikingly developed than among the Puritan colonists and their descendants. It is that quality, combined with the stubborn idealism of the Puritans, on which Amercia must count in generous measure as she faces the new problems of a time that tries men's souls.

## ***The* CONVOCATION PROGRAM**



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**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**  
**C O N V O C A T I O N**  
**PILGRIM TERCENTENARY CELEBRATION**



**T H E      A U D I T O R I U M**  
**TUESDAY - DECEMBER 21 - 1920 - 7:30 P. M.**

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessities for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity."

—*New England's First-Fruits (1663)*

**PRESIDENT DAVID KINLEY, LL.D., *Presiding***

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**ORGAN PRELUDE—Finlandia . . . . . *Sibelius***

**MR. LLOYD MOREY, Organist**

**HYMN—O God, beneath thy guiding hand . *Leonard Bacon***

**(TUNE: DUKE STREET)**

O God, beneath thy guiding hand  
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;  
And when they trod the wintry strand,  
With prayer and psalm they worshipped thee.

Thou heardest, well pleased, the song, the prayer:  
Thy blessing came, and still its power  
Shall onward through the ages bear  
The memory of that holy hour.

Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God,  
Came with those exiles o'er the waves;  
And where their pilgrim feet have trod,  
The God they trusted guards their graves.

**ADDRESS—The Place of the Pilgrims in American History**

**PROF. EVARTS B. GREENE**

**POEM—The Puritan Pilgrim to Them that Sit in the Seats  
of the Scorners**

**PROF. ERNEST BERNBAUM**

HYMN—America the Beautiful . . . *Katherine Lee Bates*

(Tune: Materno)

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea:

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,  
Whose stern impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness:  
America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law:

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved,  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness  
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

ORGAN POSTLUDE—Anno Domini 1620

*MacDowell*

MR. LLOYD MOREY, Organist

## COLONIAL EXHIBIT

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*Friends of the University, under the leadership of a committee consisting of Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Waldo, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Baldwin, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Brooks, and Mr. F. C. Baker, have gathered a loan collection illustrating the domestic arts and culture of Colonial and Revolutionary times, and including antique furniture, rugs, household utensils, china, wearing apparel, books, letters, etc. The collection will continue on exhibit in the National History Museum mornings and afternoons until December twenty-third.*

*Committee on the Pilgrim Tercentenary*  
*Ernest Bernbaum*  
*Laurence M. Larson*  
*Henry B. Ward, Chairman*





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